MY ROSARY

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GUSTAV KOBBÉ

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# MY ROSARY.

# MY ROSARY AND OTHER POEMS.

By Gustav Kobbé

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# PREFACE.

This book is, I believe, conspicuous for one merit—the poems in it are very few in number.

But after every reading from my own writings which I have given, many of my listeners have asked me where they could procure my poems and stories in collected form. I was obliged to answer that they were scattered through the pages of the various periodicals to which I contribute. I have now, at the instance of several ladies, whose kindness in this matter it would be ungracious to pass over without my most grateful acknowledgments, collected these few poems which, scattered though they were, have, as they appeared from time to time, won me many good friends, and will, I hope, in this form win me even more.

My thanks are due to the publishers of the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, the *Youth's Companion*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Harper's Bazar* and the *Leslie Weekly*, for permission to re-publish some of the poems in this book.

Morristown, N. J., May 18, 1896.

GUSTAV KOBBÉ.

TO A WOMAN.

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## MY ROSARY.

Like as a pious maiden tells her beads
I daily count how oft I gaze on thee;
For as a silent prayer thy beauty pleads
And saint-like intercedes with Him for me.

And I who love thee!—When at last I face
His awful presence, I serene shall be;
For, though my life seems wholly void of grace,
I've loved all that is good, in loving thee.

## TO A LITTLE GIRL.

Her eyes are like forget-me-nots,
So loving, kind and true;
Her lips are like a pink sea-shell
Just as the sun shines through;

Her hair is like the waving grain
In summer's golden light;
And, best of all, her little soul
Is, like a lily, white.

## TRANQUILITY.

I dreamed I was a shepherd; free of care
I lay at noon beneath a spreading tree.
No sound was borne upon the hazy air
Except the drowsy droning of a bee.

My sheep were resting in a woody nook
Where glinting sunbeams o'er soft mosses played;
My dog was lapping water at a brook
Along whose banks the grasses lightly swayed.

A blooming landscape through the valley spread,
O'er which the south wind sighed an amorous tune—
A joyous, soft, alluring bridal bed,
Bedecked for Spring and Summer's honey-moon.

I looked above me, and there burst in view
Beyond the boughs a reach of placid sky—
A limpid, luminous, unruffled blue,
Like some far sea whereon the breezes die.

* * * * * *

I 'woke, still looking upward, and discerned
Why peace had reigned supreme throughout my rest:
Mine eyes met hers—my face to hers upturned,
I'd slumbered tranquilly upon her breast.

## "SO WE'RE TOGETHER, LOVE."

So we're together, love, the sky
  Seems blue though it be grey;
And winter's unkind voice assumes
  The gracious speech of May;
And be it sad or singing weather,
We reck not, love, so we're together!

So we're together, love, the world
  Moves sweetly on in tune;
Each flower becomes a dew-washed rose,
  Each month a balmy June;
And be it sad or singing weather,
We reck not, love, so we're together!

And if together, love, at last
  We pass beyond the pale
Of this fair earth to worlds beyond
  We'll falter not nor fail;
For, be it sad or singing weather,
We reck not, love, so we're together!

So we're together, love, the sky
  Seems blue though it be grey;
And winter's unkind voice assumes
  The gracious speech of May;
And be it sad or singing weather,
We reck not, love, so we're together!

## HOMEWARD.

Clouds crimson-barred
Like the woods red-scarred
On a hill-slope in the fall;

A wild, shrill note
From a sea-bird's throat
And a heron's mournful call;

A murmuring reach
With a curving beach,
Like an eye-brow of the sea;

A prow up-curled,
A sail half-furled,
And the peace of a sheltered lee;

A sudden hush
And the last deep flush
Of dusk in the swarthy west;

A fringe of sedge
Near the water's edge,
And the cot where my loved ones nest;

A sweet, low call,
And a faint foot-fall,
And a form as I swiftly come;

Near mine a face,
Then the tender grace
Of a kiss.—And I am home!

## TO HILDEGARDE.

I know why our Lord Jesus spake
  Words that should find a shrine
In every loving parent's heart
  As they have found in mine:

That children freely be allowed
  Unto His arms to come,
Because theirs was the heritage
  Of His own heavenly home.

There must have been among the throng
  That gathered 'round Him there
A little girl whose brow, like your's,
  Was crowned with golden hair;

Whose eyes shone out beneath that brow
  So deep, so brown, so clear;
Whose voice would through the saddest hour
  Ring with a note of cheer.

Or else our good Lord Jesus spake
  Those words of tender grace,
As, through the veil of centuries,
  He saw your little face,

Uplifted with a childish faith
  That seemed to him to say :
" Lord Jesus, I will follow Thee
  Where'er Thou'lt lead the way !"

## BEFORE A PORTRAIT.

Know'st thou some far off, golden, Southern
clime
Where katydids and low-voiced crickets chime
What hour the moon hangs large upon the sky
And merry elfins to their revels hie?

Thou art so like this beauteous Southern land!
There sun-lit waves purl o'er an amber strand
As golden ringlets ripple o'er thy brow.
And he on whom thy love bestowest thou,

(Who from thy lips may sip the perfumed wine,
Whose eyes may worship at thine inner shrine)
Blest he to pluck the fruit from thy fair stem,
Thou, on whose brow rests Beauty's diadem!

## PREMONITION.

I.

Why is it that a sudden hush
  Falls on the young wife's singing;
What calls to her fair face a blush
  Like roses softly clinging?—
The echo of a cooing note,
  That last night through her dreams did float,
Her, untold rapture bringing?

II.

Soft as a little heap of snow
  There lies upon her lap,
With satin band and furbelow
  The daintiest wee cap.

And, as she adds a bit of lace,
  Her fingers swiftly fly;
A tender light shines from her face,
  She croons a lullaby.

## IN WINTER.

The earth is sleeping sweetly
  Beneath the wrap that round
Her fair form so completely
  The snow has softly wound.

She draws her breath so lightly
  Because she dreams, I wis,
How Spring will come so knightly
  To wake her with his kiss.

## THE LADY OF THE HOUSE AR-TUR.

(AN EGYPTIAN MUMMY.)

Here lies the lady of the house Ar-Tur
  Who in majestic grace and beauty strode
  Through Ahk-mim's sacred temples, who abode
Beside the laughing waters of Namur.

With princes, warriors, slaves, a stately train,
  Oft through her palace corridors she swept;
  A king, Ramses himself, the "Great" yclept,
Wooed her and, though a king, wooed her in vain.

Now all who choose to linger as they pass
  May see the proudest beauty of her day—
  Ah! Where are those who gladly owned her sway—
A shrunken mummy in a case of glass.

* * * * *

Ye fortune-favored, gather here beside
  The casket of the Lady of Ar-Tur!
  Far from the laughing waters of Namur,
What now avail her riches, beauty, pride?

## FOR A SUN-DIAL IN A GARDEN.

If here I pause a moment in my race
With time, if here forget to mark the hours,
'Tis 'cause I love to linger in this place
And watch for her—the mistress of these flowers.

LIFE.

Who knows aught of that realm of bliss
  Of which the preachers glibly tell?
  Who knows for certain there's a Hell?—
Who knows of any hell but this?

## DEATH.

Haul down the flag, the flag of life!
Weary of this unending strife,
I'll strike my colors, yield my sword
To Death, the ever-conquering lord.

ACKNOWLEDGING A LADY'S PHOTOGRAPH.

I have received your photograph
Accompanied by your autograph,
And haste my warmest thanks to send
To you, my very charming friend ;

Who's found (this all will sure agree on)
What baffled old Ponce de Leon:
The fountain of eternal youth !—
Now don't protest, for it's the truth.

"WIE BIST DU MEINE KOENIGIN."

"Wie bist Du Meine Koenigin"—
'Tis thus the song begins,
With which, as writ by Master Brahms,
Our hearts fair Julia wins.

And were I to describe the grace.
Which to this song she lends,
I'd simply echo "wonnevoll"—
The word with which it ends.

## THE COURT CRIER.

It was a haughty lawyer
Of Elizabeth, N. J.,
Who sought upon a witness
To vent his spleen one day.

The witness quick retorted
With merry wit and chaff
And soon against the lawyer
Had raised a hearty laugh.

Loud laughed the judge and jury,
The others louder yet—
All save the ancient crier
Who kept his features set,

Until to him the lawyer
Called in his sneering way :
"How is it, Mr. Perkins,
You do not laugh to-day ?"

Then quothe the solemn Perkins
(And never winked an eye):
"I am not paid to laugh, sir,
I'm only paid to cry !"

## THE WATCHER.

A watcher on the harbor hill
Gazed out upon the sea, until
The misty draperies of night
Hid the horizon from his sight.

And thus he watched days, months and years,
His eyes undimmed by coward tears,
He saw ships go and come again.—
For his own ship he watched in vain.

Till, when he'd passed through every stage
Of youth and manhood to old age,
There hove one day a craft in sight
That thrilled him with a strange delight.

With every inch of canvass spread
A favoring breeze, all clear o'er head,
Her quarters flecked with fleecy foam,
The good ship fairly leapt toward home.

Thus on and on she sped until
Her skipper saw upon the hill
The watcher; straightway from on high,
He let her gaudy pennant fly.

But lo! No signal came from him
Who stood upon the hill a dim,
Pale form outlined against the sky—
Can he the pennant not descry?

* * * * * *

Just as the good ship had at last
Come home from her long voyage, there'd passed
A faithful soul across the sea,
Whose shore is immortality.

## WHALER PLUCK.

A whaler from Nantucket town,
He had the worst o' luck,
He sailed far south, around the Horn,
But not a whale he struck.

Three years he cruised—north, east and west,
From Pole to Torrid Zone,
But, when he laid his course for home,
He'd neither oil nor bone.

Yet, as he sailed around Brant Point,
He set his pennant high;
And, when he tied up to the wharf,
He lustily did cry:

"We've come home clean as we went out,
We didn't raise a whale,
An' we ain't got a bar'l o' ile—
But we've had a damn fine sail!"

"Is it a sail?" she asked.
"No," I said.
"Only a white sea-gull with its pinions spread."

"Is it a spar?" she asked.
"No," said I.
"Only the slender light-house tower 'gainst the sky."

"Flutters a pennant there?"
"No," I said.
"Only a shred of cloud in the sunset red."

"Surely a hull, a hull!"
"Where?" I cried.
"Only a rock half-bared by the ebbing tide."

"'Wait you a ship?" I asked.
"Aye!" quoth she.
"The *Harbor Belle*; her mate comes back to marry me.

"Surely the good ship hath
Met no harm?"
Was it the west wind wailed or the babe on her arm?

"The *Harbor Belle*!" she urged.
Nought said I.—
For I knew o'er the grave o' the *Harbor Belle* the sea-gulls fly.

## THE YANKEE WHALER.

A Yankee whaler of some renown
(His hailing port was Provincetown)
Had a row with a British officer.
I don't know just where it did occur,
But I seem to have heard the shell-backs say
'Twas somewhere in South Am-er-i-cay.

The Britisher swore with all his might,
The Yank must apologize or fight.
But the Yank, he didn't scare a bit;
In a sort o' half prophetic fit,
He just made this entry in his log:
"To-morrow we'll have plum duff and grog."

As challenged party he had the right
To choose the "weepins" wherewith to fight;
So fast to his pet harpooning iron
He made ten fathom of good stout line,
Prepared another for his foe,
And said, "Now let him sound or blow!"

When they met, you should ha' heard him cry,
As he raised his pet harpoon on high:
"Stand by now, mate, for to haul him in,
When I strikes him under the starboard fin!
We'll try him out like any whale!"
The Britisher straightway turned tail.

The Yank, he entered on his log:
"Plum duff, all hands piped aft for grog!"

"My husband? Aye, my husband, man!
A year ago this day
He sailed; and him and me just wed."
Yet she was old and gray.

"The youngest master of the fleet;
But ask about the town
If better skipper sails the sea
Than Captain Ephraim Brown.

"I've knowed him most since he was born;
We was but boy and girl
When he first bore me in his skiff
Through wind and wave and swirl.

"And then he went before the mast,
And then became a mate,
And then—why, I'd growed up with him—
Here I would watch and wait.

"Across the bar off Highland Light
The wind might whistle hoarse—
'Twas by my figure on this hill
He'd always lay his course.

"Then, when he called a ship his own,
(She's named for me) he said:
'Why, Jennie, ain't it now most time
That you an' me was wed?'

"And we was wed in the old church
Just yonder, up along.
(I seems to hear the parson's voice,
The organ and the song).

"One week—and he put out to sea,
A year ago this day;
The youngest master of the fleet!"—
Yet she was old and gray.

"My husband? Aye, my husband, man!
Just past a year we're wed.
Ask any one you mind." I asked
The first I met. He said:

"Why, that's the crazy Widow Brown.
She's always watchin', though
Her husband's ship was lost at sea
Some thirty years ago."

## OBEDIAH FOLGER.

'Twas Obediah Folger
O' the whaling bark Apoller,
Who, when his shipmates hove the lead,
Straightway began to holler:
"Heave-ho, the lead; Heave-ho, Heave-ho!
We're sailing over so-and-so,
I knows the taste o' the mud below,
Heave-ho, the lead! Heave-ho!

'Twas Obediah Folger
Whose shipmates thought it very slick
With rich Nantucket garden muck
To besmear the lead quite thick.
"Heave-ho, the lead! Ha, ha! Ho, ho!
Will Obediah Folger know
This time the taste o' the mud below?
Heave-ho, the lead! Heave-ho!"

'Twas Obediah Folger
O' the whaling bark Apoller
Who, when he tasted of the muck,
Straightway began to holler:
"Heave-ho, the lead! Heave-ho! Heave-ho!
Nantucket's sunk! I know, I know,
Marm Starbuck's squash-bed is just below!
Heave-ho, the lead! Heave-ho!"

'Twas Obediah Folger
Whose shipmates entered on the log
This incident, then went below
For to brew for him a grog.
"Heave-ho, the lead! Heave-ho! Heave-ho!
It's old Jamaicy rum, I know
From the way it warms me up below!
Heave-ho, the lead! Heave-ho!"

## THE LIGHT-HOUSE.

'Tis like a patient, faithful soul
That, having reached its saintly goal
And seeing others far astray
In storms of darkness and dismay,
Shines out o'er life's tempestuous sea,
A beacon to some sheltered lee—
The haven of eternity.

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